GEORGIANS

All decrees and laws which the Central Executive Committee passed had to bear Yenukidze's signature as well as that of Kalinin. Early in 1935 the Transcaucasian Federation approached TsIK with the request that Yenukidze should be relieved of his post so that he could become Prime Minister of the Transcaucasian federal Government. Soon afterwards, Yenukidze was indeed relieved of his post, but not to take up the high office reserved for him. He was dismissed as a punishment for alleged lack of vigilance, for having allowed untrustworthy elements to infiltrate into important positions of the TsIK apparatus. Two and a half years later Yenukidze was executed as a traitor, together with other high-ranking Soviet officials, including the Armenian-born diplomat Karakhan (1889-1937), former Soviet ambassador to Turkey and China. The Yenukidze riddle is easily solved. When Yenukidze was sacked, Stalin had already decided to scrap the Transcaucasian Federation, which was no longer necessary for the checking of local nationalism in view of the consolidation of the central state machinery. Stalin had no need for a strong personality like Yenukidze at the head of the Transcaucasian Government, who might have instilled new life into a dying body. The Federation was formally disbanded in 1936 with the introduction of the new Stalin constitution.

In the place of Ordzhonikidze and Yenukidze, another prominent Georgian penetrated into the supreme Soviet leadership and into the closest circle of Stalin's favourites. His name was Lavrenty Beriya. His principal merit was that he had carried out purges all over Transcaucasia. These had been of such importance for the strengthening of the Soviet régime as a whole that they led to his appointment to the post of all-Union Soviet police chief in December 1938.

GEORGIA'S ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL MISSION

In the inter-war period the Soviet central authorities considered Georgia primarily from the point of view of its economic usefulness. We have already referred to the manganese mines of Chiaturi. They are not the largest manganese ore deposits in the U.S.S.R., which are those of Nikopol in the Ukraine, but the Chiaturi ores contain a higher percentage of manganese and are famous for their high quality. In the early years of the Soviet régime the Chiaturi manganese played an important part in Russian foreign trade, and as late as 1931 Chiaturi covered 42 per cent of the world demand for that valuable mineral. In later years Chiaturi manganese was less used for export in view of the discovery of new manganese ore deposits in the 'capitalistic world', but Soviet industry itself relied greatly on Chiaturi's output.

Apart from boosting manganese production, the Soviet régime encouraged the increase of Georgia's oil and coal output and founded over

† [Cf. category 665, pp. 230-231 — Analyst]

800 industrial enterprises in the country, most of which had a local importance only. Great attention was paid to the cultivation of tea and citrus fruits. The tea plantations, almost non-existent before the First World War, covered 128,440 acres in 1947. Tea production increased from 264,556 pounds in 1913 to 118,814,635 pounds in 1940, and the entire Soviet Union is now drinking 'Georgian tea'. Georgia has become completely dependent on the Russian market for this new produce of her soil; an independent Georgian State would hardly be able to find alternative buyers for the quantity of tea which is being grown on Georgian territory on the basis of all-Union economic planning.

The same would most probably apply to Georgia's citrus fruits, for which Georgia has also a monopoly in the U.S.S.R. The Georgian citrus fruit plantations grew from 295 acres in 1913 to 24,700 acres in 1938, but an ambitious plan fixing the area of these plantations at 98,000 acres in 1944 has remained largely on paper. Such a sensational increase had been decreed by the Council of Peoples Commissars of the U.S.S.R. on April 25th, 1940, but even without the interruption of the war the fulfilment of these targets might have proved unattainable. After the war, the question of the Georgian citrus fruit plantations was reconsidered by the central Government. A new decree was enacted on February 15th, 1946, which fixed the revised target for 1950 at 72,600 acres only.

It was the Georgian Government which was entrusted with the unpopular task of prohibiting the Georgian collective farmers from planting the areas reserved for the new citrus plantations with anything but lemons, oranges and tangerines. The overall responsibility for the implementation of the decree on the development of Georgian citrus plantations was, however, divided between the all-Union Ministry for Technical Cultures and the Georgian Government.

The extension of tea and citrus fruit plantations in Georgia prevented any increase in the local wheat and maize production which would have corresponded to the 32 per cent augmentation of Georgia's population between 1926 and 1939. Even before the First World War Georgia was forced to import cereals in years of an average harvest. The agricultural policy which the Soviet régime had pursued in Georgia made things much worse. In 1950 Georgia had to import 75 per cent of its bread supply from other Soviet Republics. This state of affairs was bound to cause considerable dissatisfaction in the country and the Communist Party found itself compelled to change its agrarian policy. It introduced a special seven-year plan for Georgian agriculture with the aim of making the republic self-sufficient in cereals by 1957.

The economic assignments given to Georgia were not of such magnitude as to require any substantial manpower imports. On the contrary, the Georgians belong to those few peoples in the Soviet Union who should be able to cope with the tasks allotted to them by economic